



# **LINCOLN CHAFEE**

## **U.S. SENATOR**

### **RHODE ISLAND**

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## **CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS OUTLINE NEW APPROACH TO ENDANGERED SPECIES**

*Crapo, Chafee, Pombo and Walden announce House-Senate  
partnership*

**WASHINGTON DC**-A new approach to improve and update the Endangered Species Act was presented at a news conference today Senators with Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) and Lincoln Chafee (R-Rhode Island), the chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, and Water, along with House Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo (R-California) and Representative Greg Walden (R-Oregon). The members signaled the start of a House-Senate partnership approach to addressing the issue.

"The Endangered Species Act is one of our most important laws and Congress will soon begin seeing proposals concerning it," said Senator Crapo. "We have agreed to work together with bill sponsors and I am determined to achieve this ESA improvement with bi-partisan support in both chambers to develop a consistent approach in both chambers. Our goal is to strengthen the ESA by improving habitat conservation and recovery, providing more and better incentives, and enhancing the role of states where appropriate. Overall, we believe the ESA can be less contentious and more effective."

Since 1973, the Endangered Species Act has worked to protect thousands of species and the habitats upon which they depend," Chairman Chafee said. "Across the nation, there are new and innovative approaches to advancing species conservation and recovery. We will be taking a hard look at ways to improve the Act in the subcommittee this year by holding hearings that involve a broad group from the environmental and business communities. I look forward to working with Senator Crapo, Chairman Pombo and Representative Walden to craft legislation that enhances recovery of species and the conservation of habitat."

"The ESA desperately needs an update and a renewed focus on species recovery," Chairman Pombo said. "Its one-percent recovery result over the past thirty years has failed to lived up to the Act's noble intent and our intrinsic values as Americans. These are vital statistics that no individual can support. As such, I am eager to continue the work that is being done between our chambers and optimistic that we can breathe new life into this law for the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

"It is critical that we modernize and strengthen the 30-year-old ESA so that it can become a more effective tool for recovering threatened and endangered species," said Representative Walden. "As the hard-working people in Oregon's Klamath Basin will tell you, and the National Academy of Sciences will confirm, this well-intended law simply isn't working as it should. Not only should the health of species throughout the nation be demonstrably improved by the ESA, but the health of communities and local economies should also be carefully addressed as they too are directly impacted by the policy decisions driven by the Act. For the sake of these communities, imperiled species, and the environment that is habitat for these species, I am confident we can make positive strides toward improving the results of the ESA and bringing it into the 21st century."

"Americans want the Endangered Species Act to achieve its purpose of recovering species," said Interior Secretary Gale Norton. "Today's announcement that these key members of Congress will be working to update and strengthen the ESA is noteworthy and encouraging. We are prepared to work with Congress and stakeholders to identify ways to improve the recovery of endangered species."

The members focused on issues like addressing priorities, increasing funding, and more inclusive participation in scientific questions.

While hearings are not yet scheduled, we expect to see bills introduced and we will work with all sponsors to coordinate a positive effort this year.

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